

Physician executive creates disposable medical instruments

The challenge: Instrument sterilization has been a common practice in obstetrics and gynecology offices, but sterilization may not be a practical solution for all OB/GYN offices. Although only a few instruments are reused routinely, their reuse is worrisome since they can be contaminated by infectious agents such as hepatitis, HIV and HPV (human papilloma virus). Contaminated medical instruments can be sterilized. Yet, even under the best of circumstances, sterilization can be a difficult and expensive process.

The concept: Eliminate instrument sterilization in OB/GYN offices by replacing existing instruments with disposable, cost-effective instruments and have a lower environmental impact than traditional sterilization techniques.

The company: GYNDisposables was founded in 2004 in Memphis. Dr. James Patterson developed the company's business plan when he was enrolled in the Physicians Executive MBA program at the University of Tennessee.



Patterson

The challenge: GYNDisposables encountered several major obstacles, among them:

- Not all the instruments used in the OB/GYN office were available in a cost-effective, nonstainless form. (Most instruments are made of stainless steel and must be chemically sterilized.)

- It was difficult from a design standpoint to adequately replicate the functionality of the instruments.

- Medical instrument reuse generally was not perceived as a problem by either patient or physician.

- Single-use instruments were (inaccurately) viewed as being more expensive. (In fact, sterilization can cost a clinic up to hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.) This perceived cost issue was particularly problematic in an environment where overhead costs are increasing and revenue is decreasing.

The solution: GYNDisposables overcame these obstacles and developed a solution that addressed these issues — availability of highly functional, disposable instruments packed in single-use kits. This solution enhances patient safety and comfort. It also maximizes physician consultation time, increases office efficiency and decreases labor costs.

“Single-use instruments offer peace

GYNDISPOSABLES INC.

Founder/CEO: Dr. James Patterson

Mailing address: P.O. Box 34428, Memphis, Tenn. 38184

Phone: 901-377-2200

Email: jpatterson@gyndisposables.com

Web site: www.gyndisposables.com

of mind to both the patient and the physician,” Patterson says. “As an added benefit, all GYNDisposable products are produced with planet-friendly materials; conserve resources; and have an up-to 90 percent reduction in solid clinical waste — such as gloves, tissue, wraps, solvents and plastics — associated with the sterilization process.”

The first instrument GYNDisposables introduced was a cervical tenaculum used in almost all gynecologic procedures. No major changes had been made to this instrument in more than half a century.

After multiple design changes, Tenaculum 356T became the first FDA-approved, nonstainless cervical tenaculum on the market. Its patent-pending design is a technologically advanced, lighter instrument that offers many advantages over its predecessors, including less pain and bleeding for the patient.

The company plans to ultimately roll out kits for all OB/GYN in-office procedures. By having appropriate kits readily accessible for procedures, GYNDisposables anticipates office processes to be greatly simplified.

“We see tremendous potential for these products in increasing patient health, decreasing patient discomfort and allowing physicians more time with their patients,” Patterson said. “We just started marketing the products and already have received a tremendous amount of interest. Multiple health departments across the country have contacted us and have ordered our product.”

Case Study is provided by the University of Tennessee's College of Business Administration. For more information, contact Cindy Raines at craines1@utk.edu.